

Fiscal Note

BILL # HB 2600

TITLE: adoption; original birth certificate; release

SPONSOR: Roberts

STATUS: As Amended by House HHS

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Description

The bill would require the Department of Health Services (DHS) to provide a copy of an individual's original birth certificate that was sealed due to an adoption if that individual meets certain requirements. In addition, the bill would require the department to develop optional contact preference and medical history forms to be sealed with original birth certificates.

Estimated Impact

The bill would increase ongoing costs to DHS by \$256,000 for additional staff time associated with processing additional requests and filing medical history and contact preference forms. The bill would allow DHS to collect fees for processing these requests that are consistent with existing fees for obtaining a copy of a birth record. In addition, the bill would generate one-time costs for amending vital records systems to release sealed birth records. DHS estimates these costs would be between \$1.0 million and \$1.5 million.

To the extent that the bill reduces the number of sealed records released through court orders, costs to the local courts would decrease. The impact cannot be determined in advance.

Analysis

Current law prohibits DHS from issuing copies of sealed birth certificates unless required by a court order. Beginning January 2021, the bill would allow DHS to provide a copy of an individual's original birth certificate that was sealed due to an adoption without a court order if that individual is at least 18 years old, was born in Arizona, and submits a written request. The bill would also require DHS to develop optional forms to be sealed with birth certificates to indicate the birth parent's medical history and preference for being contacted, and allow birth parents to file amended forms. Birth parents would also be required to acknowledge in a notarized statement the child's ability to obtain an original birth certificate.

DHS reports there are approximately 1.2 million sealed birth records currently stored in its vital records system. DHS reports it would need an additional 4 FTE Positions to meet the bill's provisions: 2 customer service representatives, 1 program specialist, and 1 specialist for maintaining changes to the vital records system. The annual cost of the additional positions would be approximately \$265,000. The bill would allow DHS to collect fees for processing these requests that are consistent with existing fees for obtaining a copy of a birth record. In addition, costs may increase on a one-time basis to make changes to the department's existing vital records systems to release sealed records. DHS estimates these costs would be between \$1.0 million and \$1.5 million.

Local Government Impact

To the extent that the bill reduces the number of sealed birth certificates released through the court order process, costs to local courts would decrease. The impact cannot be determined in advance.

2/21/20

JLBC